IN THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheet includes a proposed diagram illustrating exemplary timing of signals shown in FIGs. 2 and 3.

Attachment: Proposed New Sheet

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated May 26, 2006, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on August 26, 2006. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application. Claims 1-21 remain pending following entry of this response. Claims 1, 3, 10, 17 and 21 have been amended. New claim 22 has been added. Applicants submit that the amendments and new claim do not introduce new matter.

Drawings

Drawings of timing sequence of signals in Fig 2 and Fig 3 that describe the interrelationship among signals CM-I, CLK, DST, #A51, #A52, #A53, #A54, #A55 #A40 are requested.

As requested by the Examiner, Applicants submit (as proposed FIG. 4) a drawing of an exemplary timing sequence of signals in Fig 2 and Fig 3. Upon acceptance by the Examiner, Applicants will amend the specification to refer to the drawing in the Brief Description of the Drawings section and in the appropriate location within the Specification directed to FIGs. 2 and 3.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 10, 12, 17, 19, and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Bando* (US 2002/0145930). Claims 4-9, 11, 13-16, 18, and 20 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Bando*.

The Examiner bears the initial burden of establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness. *See* MPEP § 2142. To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one ordinary skill

in the art, to modify the reference or to combine the reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Third, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. *See* MPEP § 2143.

The present rejection fails to establish at least the third criteria. For example, *Bando* fails to teach a buffer device for buffer-storing an external command received in a critical operating state period during which execution of the command is impermissible and for releasing the command for execution after end of the critical operating state period, wherein a multi-bit status signal indicates the critical operating state period and a type of critical operating state, as recited in independent claim 1. Independent claims 10, 17 and 21, are also directed to buffering external commands received in critical operating states, as indicated by a multi-bit status signal.
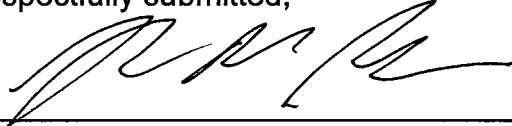
As described in the specification of the present application, this buffering avoids the need to reject an external command in the event a memory device is in a state incompatible with that command. The multi-bit status signal allows the identification different critical states, which may be incompatible with different external commands (see paragraph [0026]). There is no teaching in Bando of the claimed functionality of a multi-bit status signal indicating critical operating state periods. In contrast, *Bando* teaches only a simple decision circuitry that detects the first arrival of an internally generated command and an external command (see paragraph [0051] of *Bando)*.

Accordingly, Applicants submit claims 1, 10, 17 and 21, as well as their dependents, are allowable and respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections.

Conclusion

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

Randol W. Read
Registration No. 43,876
PATTERSON & SHERIDAN, L.L.P.
3040 Post Oak Blvd. Suite 1500
Houston, TX 77056
Telephone: (713) 623-4844
Facsimile: (713) 623-4846
Attorney for Applicants